



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

New Year Brings New Challenges

As the new year progresses, we can look forward to continuing to work on our mission to provide positive outcomes for children. Integral to this mission is achieving progress on the priority outcomes set for the Department including decreasing the amount of time children spend in foster care; improving the safety of children in our care; and reducing our reliance on detention.

Looking back, DCFS had a lot to be proud of in 2003. Efforts to reduce caseloads have resulted in a 10 percent drop.

The Homestudy Completion Project was a success. In just a matter of months, the Adoptions Division was able to complete more than 1,600 adoptive home studies, freeing up thousands of children for adoption.

Staff proposed innovative ideas such as the Torrance Adoption Model which began integrating adoption work into the Service Planning Area (SPA) offices in order to decrease the time from placement of children to adoption.

DCFS met the challenge that came with the closure of MacLaren Children's Center. We continue to work diligently to provide needed services to the highest-risk children under our care. Meanwhile, the Paramount Family Conferencing and Reception Center and more community-based services are planned to further meet the needs of children and families.

This year we also integrated the Department's Bureau of Child Protection into each of the regional offices (SPAs) to provide direct services to children and families that effectively address needs for safety, stability and permanence within a specific geographic area.

In 2003, the Department received support from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on issues including education improvements for children, risk management improvements and improvements to the processes at the Child Protection Hotline. The Board was also supportive in the need for more fiscal accountability that is now incorporated into the Foster Family Agency contracts.

Last year, we worked with the Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families on a number of important projects and improvements. The Commission provided valuable input on improvements to adoption, relative care, mental health services, Family Preservation and Family Group Decision Making and meeting the needs of high-risk children. The Commission also worked on the development of the Family Conferencing and Reception Centers plan.

Now is the time to look toward the goals for 2004.

This year, more non case-carrying CSWs will be rede-

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DCFS Serves as Early Implementer of Child Welfare Services Redesign

Los Angeles County Will Have Pivotal Role in Ensuring State's Success

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is one of 11 counties designated by the State of California as an "early implementer" of the Child Welfare Services (CWS) Redesign. L.A. County was chosen as an early implementer not only because of its size but because its participation will help inform implementation efforts statewide. Early implementing counties function as "learning labs," enabling the State to refine key practices as they are taken to scale Statewide.

Planning the CWS Redesign started in 2000 under the leadership of the State Legislature and Governor. A 60-member Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group was appointed to examine the current reality of child welfare services throughout California. The group also was charged with building on effective child welfare practices inside the State and elsewhere and recommending system changes to improve outcomes for children and families. In September, the Stakeholders Group submitted its final report and efforts to implement the CWS Redesign are now underway.

In its truest sense, the CWS Redesign represents a comprehensive transformation of the State's child welfare system, moving away from its current crisis orientation to one that is prevention-focused and community-based. It provides a road map that lays out how to improve current systems with a fundamental focus on child safety. As an umbrella effort, the CWS Redesign also details how California will undertake the State's federally-required Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and implement the new California Outcomes and Ac-

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CWS REDESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Partner to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect
- Act Early to Preserve and Strengthen Families
- Broaden Efforts to Restore Family Capacity
- Strengthen Alternatives to Rebuild Permanent Families for Children
- Systematically Prepare Youth for Success in Adulthood
- Affect Change through Workforce Excellence
- Expand and Restructure Child Welfare Financing
- Achieve Better Outcomes through Accountability

WINTER 2004

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

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ployed to the field to continue lowering caseloads and increasing the amount of time CSWs spend with families.

We will continue to work collaboratively with the Commission. The Department has their support and they remain a vehicle for citizen input that is critical to our functioning.

We will work with group homes and Foster Family Agencies to improve outcomes for children.

DCFS will continue working on our relationship with law enforcement agencies throughout Los Angeles County to ensure we are all working together in the best interest of the children and families we serve. The Multi-Agency Response Initiative will put CSWs in law enforcement stations throughout the County creating a closer working relationship between law enforcement and the Department.

We will continue to appeal to the federal and state government to provide us with the funding flexibility needed to provide services to keep families together.

As an early implementer of the state Child Welfare Services Redesign, DCFS has already begun leading other counties in proactively looking at what works and what needs improvement within the agency. We have already begun working on the priority outcomes that will help us achieve the state and federal goals outlined in the Redesign.

The new year brings new challenges and changes, but I know that we will make great strides in achieving these goals. I look forward to your enthusiasm and ideas in helping to achieve better outcomes for children. ■

David Sanders, Ph.D.

Director

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES REDESIGN

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countability System, which was promulgated by SB 636. By 2005, DCFS will be held responsible for outcomes outlined in the PIP.

The California Department of Social Services is providing incentive funds to counties to assist them with planning, assessing and developing implementation strategies for the Redesign with the ultimate goal of achieving improved outcomes for child safety, permanency and child/family well-being. To support efforts in L.A. County, DCFS will receive \$6.8 million over five years.

"The Redesign has provided an opportunity for State leadership to provide clarity about outcomes and provide a policy that supports those outcomes. In its implementation phase, it will also provide a broad consistency of policies," said DCFS Director Dr. David Sanders. "The Redesign will assure that State funding really supports positive outcomes for children. This is really a shift in the culture from crisis response mentality to early intervention."

According to Dr. Sanders, DCFS is committed to implementing the strategies and recommendations laid out in the Redesign. The Department's three priority outcomes of ensuring safety, increasing permanency and reducing the reliance on detention already support many of the objectives outlined in the Redesign.

As an early implementer, DCFS has committed to looking at ways to prevent children from entering the system and intervention efforts aimed at children and families that are already in the system. It also will be able to test system changes necessary for achieving successful outcomes. Through its appeal for IV-E waiver funds, DCFS hopes to redirect funds into early intervention and prevention. Other components earmarked for improvement include developing a stronger relationship between the Department and the community and an enhanced emancipation program, including the creation of life-long relationships with youth emancipating from the system.

A consultant has been hired by the Department to facilitate forums in each of the Service Planning Areas (SPAs) so that various communities are included in the discussion of the County's implementation of the Redesign. The forums are intended also to allow for identification of specific programmatic approaches that may be useful for DCFS consideration as it tests changes to the child welfare and foster care system. The Department's leadership in communicating with communities in each SPA is a practice recommended in the Redesign.

For more general information about the history and specifics of the CWS Redesign, log onto www.cwsredesign.ca.gov. ■

Department Seeks Millions in Funding to Help Keep Families Together

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has initiated plans to work with the State to apply for a Title IV-E waiver from the federal government. The waiver will allow DCFS the flexibility to allocate the money to develop up-front preventative services and additional intensive services to support timely reunification or an alternative permanency plan for children and families. It will also be used to improve outcomes for children who are under the Department's care.

The Department's move is similar to a step taken by Illinois in the late 1990s that helped dramatically reduce that state's foster care population.

Traditionally, Los Angeles County has provided services based on funding eligibility, which oftentimes is not in line with the needs of children and families, explained Joan Smith, DCFS Bureau Chief of Finance. In the past, DCFS has relied primarily on removal of children from the home, which is the primary use of IV-E assistance funds. Under the waiver, the IV-E funds would be able to be used whether or not the child is removed from the home. In addition, the waiver would allow for flexibility to use the funds to provide direct services not currently funded by IV-E based on each family's individual needs to ensure that children remain safely in their family of origin, are reunified sooner, or an alternative permanency plan is achieved timely.

If approved, the IV-E funds would force a shift in

Concerns from line staff about current practices and how the IV-E funding will affect them:

- More open communication is needed. We must share information so it becomes a tool for learning.
- How are critical decisions made on the line? Are they made in teams and will management support the decisions made?
- Clerical support must know they are part of the team.
- Open up communication with the communities we serve. Allow Service Planning Area offices the ability to communicate with their communities.

thinking and practices away from removal as the safest and best alternative for children.

"The waiver is about practice changes," said Dr. David Sanders, DCFS Director. "Practices that better support the family initially to keep kids in families. We must work quicker toward permanent resolution when children are in out-of-home care, and we need better consistency in practices at the front end. This funding will help us explore ways to provide better services."

Staff has already begun preparing for approval of the waiver and implementation of the funding.

"We talked to line staff to get input about practices," said DCFS Regional Administrator Amaryllis Watkins. "We have to have buy-in from line staff. If approved, the waiver will be implemented in October. That means effective October 1st, we need to be ready to use these services in the community."

"As caseloads go down, there will be more interaction with families," added Child Protection

"The biggest challenge will come in changing people's attitude that placement should be used as the last resort when ensuring child safety. Basically, getting people to realize that placement does not ensure child safety."

— Child Protection Hotline Regional Administrator Joi Russell

Hotline Regional Administrator Joi Russell. "But we are confident that this will result in an improved quality of work and more job satisfaction. Social workers will move from case management to real social work. The biggest challenge will come in changing people's attitude that placement should be used as the last resort when ensuring child safety. Basically, getting people to realize that placement does not ensure child safety."

Concerns from the line about current practices and how the IV-E waiver will change those, center mostly around communication, team decision-making, resource availability and staffing. An internal workgroup is looking at strategies for alleviating these concerns including identifying more resources to help at the front end, doing a needs assessment, engaging more community partnerships and identifying the need for team decision facilitators who would be brought in as early as possible in the placement process.

The waiver concept has already gained support from the L.A. County Commission on Children and Families and the L.A. County Board of Supervisors. Approval of the waiver is expected by the federal government this spring. ■

DCFS Working with Group Homes to Better Meet the Needs of Foster Children

In an effort to provide a higher quality of care to foster children who reside in group homes, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is working more closely with group home providers to make sure the vital medical, psychological and educational needs of these children are met. Recently, DCFS Director Dr. David Sanders initiated talks with group home providers to present the goals for the Department and discuss changes that are needed to meet those goals.

"Group homes have to be supportive of the Department's goals which include shortening timelines to providing permanent homes, increasing safety and reducing the reliance on foster care," said Dr. Sanders. "We need to think together as a unit."

DCFS released a group homes contract solicitation in January. Qualified group home providers were expected to meet performance outcomes consistent with DCFS goals for children and families. Multi-agency collaboration and communication in both the development and implementation of each child's need and service plan under group home care is essential.

Currently, DCFS contracts with group homes, which receive funding for the children in their care. Monthly funding per child ranges depending on the severity of the child's psychological and medical needs.

The Department has identified five areas of improvement it is working on with group homes. They include:

- Improving the referral process to make appropriate placements and make sure there are no gaps in service. This will

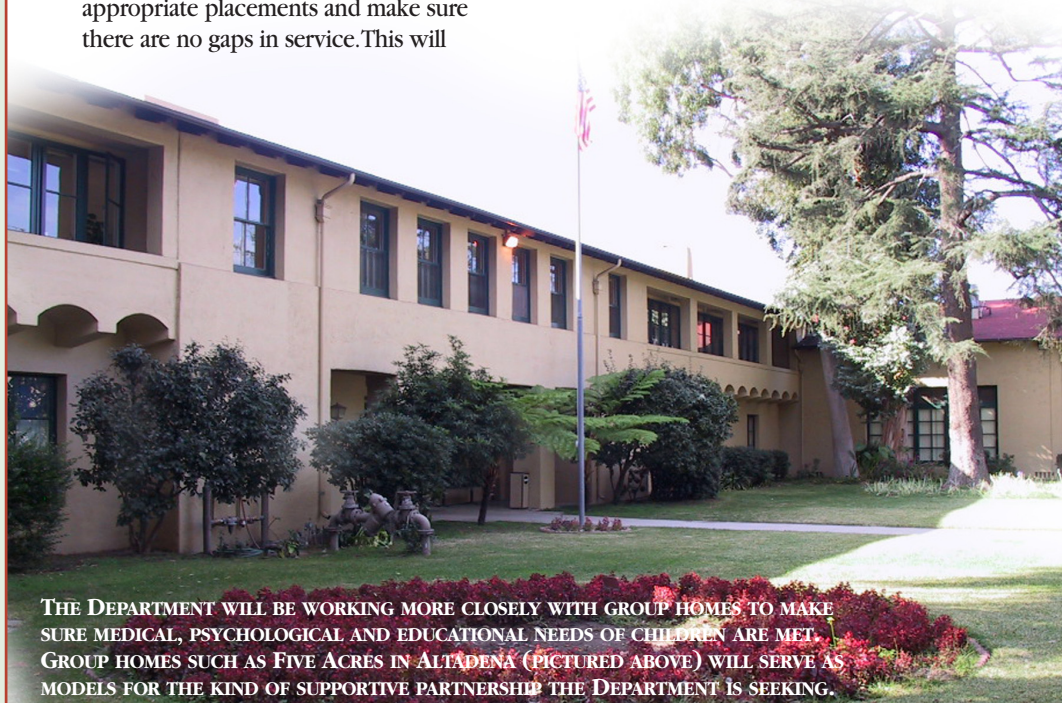
ensure that no child falls through the cracks and that no group home will be able to refuse to house a child;

- Preventing premature discharges so social workers are not left with the sole responsibility of finding emergency placement for a child on short notice;
- Timely reunification with a family when reunification is possible;
- A reduction of the abuse rate in group homes; and
- Better education for foster children in group homes.

The Department has plans to establish a more comprehensive working relationship between community-based providers and group homes.

Dr. Sanders has also identified areas in which the Department will share a greater responsibility. Under its new Office of Health Care Planning, DCFS will more closely monitor the quality of medical and psychological treatment provided to the children from looking at how staff is dispersing medications to examining the types of group therapy sessions that are used. The Department has plans to help group homes providers develop in-house crisis plans to better deal with situations that arise with children who have severe psychological and emotional issues.

"This is not about pointing fingers," said Dr. Sanders. "Ultimately, this is about helping the group homes establish a better working relationship with community-based providers and the Department to provide a win-win situation." ■



THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE WORKING MORE CLOSELY WITH GROUP HOMES TO MAKE SURE MEDICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN ARE MET. GROUP HOMES SUCH AS FIVE ACRES IN ALTADENA (PICTURED ABOVE) WILL SERVE AS MODELS FOR THE KIND OF SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIP THE DEPARTMENT IS SEEKING.

Drug Endangered Children Team and Law Enforcement Work Together to Rescue Children

DEC Program Part of Multi-Agency Response Initiative

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Program has expanded its role in helping children as part of a Multi-Agency Response Initiative that was kicked off by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, DCFS and law enforcement agencies in January.

The Initiative, which was introduced in April 2003 as a pilot program, is a new step toward establishing a more collaborative effort between DCFS and law enforcement when dealing with cases in which children are exposed to dangerous drug and gang activity. Since the pilot program began, 144 children have been rescued by law enforcement and DCFS.

In these cases, law enforcement and DCFS social

workers work hand-in-hand to rescue children during search warrants and gang raids. The law enforcement agencies involved in the Initiative include the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department and Long Beach Police Department.

Eight specially trained CSWs are now working out of police stations within these jurisdictions with law enforcement gang and narcotic teams. The team works on providing community-based services and referrals to provide services to the children and families involved. The team will also deal with gang and drug intervention and prevention.

The Department's involvement in rescuing children from drug environments began with the DEC Program in 1997 as a multi-disciplinary collaborative effort

between the District Attorney's Office, DCFS and the Los Angeles Interagency Metropolitan Police Apprehension Crime Task Force (L.A. Impact) targeting methamphetamine production.

Since the Team's inception, more than 600 children have been rescued from 250 meth labs. These children receive specialized medical and social services to diagnose and treat the physical and emotional effects of drug exposure.

"We average about 190 to 250 drug busts a year," said Emilio Mendoza, DCFS DEC Coordinator. CSWs immediately respond to the children's needs and

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SOCIAL WORKERS WHO ARE TRAINED AS PART OF THE DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN RESPONSE TEAM, ROUTINELY PARTICIPATE IN RESCUING CHILDREN DURING RAIDS OF HOMES WHERE METH LABS ARE HOUSED, SUCH AS THE ONE PICTURED LEFT.

New Unit to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children

Last August, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors instructed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Probation Department, in collaboration with the Children's Law Center, to convene a workgroup to address the educational needs of foster and probation youth. Out of this effort evolved a proposal urging the creation of an Education Coordinating Council as well as the development of a new Education Unit within DCFS that would work independently of Probation. By working collaboratively with school districts, the judiciary, children's attorneys and advocates, the Unit will seek to improve the educational outcomes for DCFS children in order to enhance their chances of achieving productive adult lives.

The process of bringing parties together to address the educational needs of youth in foster care began last May. More than 100 educators, child welfare experts, advocates and community leaders gathered for a first ever day-long "Education Summit" aimed at identifying key issues, challenges and possible reforms relating to the educational needs of Los Angeles County's foster youth. At the conclusion of the Summit, the attendees presented over 50 specific recommendations for reform and agreed to continue their collaborative efforts to bring about these reforms.

Other participants included representatives from the Los Angeles County Office of Education, Los Angeles Unified School District, other school districts, the judiciary, California Youth Connection, the Los Angeles Commission on Children and Families, Probation Commission, Children's

Planning Council, Los Angeles City Commission on Children and Families, foster caregiver groups, Public Defender and District Attorney.

Miriam Krinsky, the Executive Director of the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, was one the driving forces behind the convening of the Summit as well as the creation of the proposal for the formation of the Education Coordinating Council.

"The Education Coordinating Council will enable our community to build upon the momentum generated at last May's Education Summit and create a concrete mechanism for intergovernmental systems to work together to address the critical educational needs of these youth," said Krinsky.

It was determined that policies and procedure need to be streamlined regarding the access and transfer of education records, enrollment and disenrollment, ensuring and maintaining school and placement stability, and calculating and transferring school credits.

The areas targeted to improve the educational outcomes for DCFS children include:

- Assessing each child's educational level upon detention and taking appropriate school and/or program placement action;
- Insuring quicker and more effective enrollment and disenrollment; locating and transferring school records, and appropriately recording coursework credit;
- Developing school readiness skills promoting language, cognitive,

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Wraparound and SOC: Utilizing Community Resources to Creatively Meet the Needs of Families

Wraparound Team Supports Family

Wraparound is a strength-based, family-centered process, which utilizes the family's strengths to address their identified needs. The family creates a child and family team (CFT), which will support them in their efforts to keep, or return their children home. Wraparound is a voluntary process, which allows the Team to work with the family on their goals, while supporting and ensuring the safety of the children.

The CFT includes, but is not limited to, relatives, community supporters, neighbors, a Children's Social Worker (CSW), and the contracted Wraparound provider. The Wraparound provider hires a meeting facilitator to support and guide the process, a parent partner, who has already gone through the experience of having his or her own children removed and a child and family specialist. A CFT priority is for the Team to be comprised mostly of nonprofessionals, so their community is meeting the family's needs.

The Wraparound process is designed to prevent children from going to Level 12 or Level 14 group homes and Metropolitan State Hospital. Wraparound is also designed to help children return from Level 12 or 14 group homes and Metropolitan State Hospital.

With Wraparound, the team members are encouraged to think creatively to meet the needs of the family. For example, a child specialist may take the child on outings to give the parent or parents some needed time off or find out how the child is doing at school and if tutoring is needed. Meetings take place as many times as necessary in order to achieve the family's goals.

Dr. Jackie Acosta, Deputy Director for Services Bureau 3, describes Wraparound as evolving and expanding. Dr. Acosta estimates a target of 1,500-plus cases of children utilizing Wraparound. She sees quality, established providers willing to go into the community and effectively coordinating their efforts with DCFS staff as keys to success.

Intensive In-Home Therapy Provided by Systems of Care

Systems of Care (SOC) is a mental health-driven program with therapists and case managers going into the home and providing intensive, in-home individual and family therapy. The program operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. SOC is targeted for children who are at risk of being placed in a higher level of care, where outpatient services have previously been unsuccessful.

"Wraparound and SOC represent a philosophical change in that the family initiates the change and parents are regarded as the experts on their children," said Dr. Michael Rauso, Division Chief overseeing both Wraparound and SOC.

Both programs are a collaborative effort between the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Probation and DCFS. Probation, DMH and DCFS sit on the Interagency Screening Committee (ISC) which reviews submitted cases and decides if they are appropriate. DMH helps with the mental health component; with diagnoses, mental health assessments and referrals.

CSWs may first discuss the case with their SPA Liaison. If appropriate, the CSW completes the referral packet and the liaison schedules them for consultation with the ISC.

THE LINE

"ON THE
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SOCIAL WORK.

Wraparound & SOC Liaison Sees Dramatic Results

Susana Martinez, a seven-year veteran with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), is currently stationed in the North Hollywood office as Liaison with the Wraparound and Systems of Care (SOC) for Service Planning Area (SPA) II.

Martinez describes Wraparound as a strength-based, child-driven process in which parents' and children's strengths are individually assessed with the parents then determining where they need help. The parents also decide whom they want to work with as part of their team so their children can remain in their home. Wraparound is targeted for the child that is behaviorally acting out where the parents cannot control them and they need extra help.

"We are trying to change the way we do social work by us not dictating our needs to them," said Martinez.



SUSANA MARTINEZ

SOC is a mental health-driven program with therapists and case managers going into the home and providing mental health services with intensive in-home therapy. SOC is targeted for children who are at risk of being placed in a higher level of care, where outpatient services have previously been unsuccessful.

"These families have already reached a point where they are hopeless and they have given up on reunification with their children. Wraparound helps them come up with the solution, bringing in other family members to support them. We build a community around them to maintain that placement. These are kids that have gone

through our system and there is nowhere else for them to go. They have been through multiple placements and have had multiple hospitalizations," explained Martinez.

Martinez recalled a boy who had been at MacLaren for nearly a year and was posing problems for his family with his fire-setting behavior. No group home would take him. He was referred to Wraparound and was transitioned home after his family was asked what they needed for him to remain home safely. The father was having difficulty waking up his son every morning and did not want to start fighting with him. He also needed to make sure that his son was attending a non-public school and keeping busy.

The Wraparound Team arranged for a Therapeutic Behavioral Specialist to be at the home on school mornings. In the afternoon, the boy was kept active with basketball and other extra curricular activities. He continued with his therapy and met with the Wraparound Team on a regular basis. Whenever there was a crisis, the youth would call and talk to a Wraparound Team member who would go to his home if necessary.

The case was recently closed as both parent and youth have met all their goals. The child is now volunteering at school, spending equal amounts of time attending non-public and public school. Wraparound Services permitted this boy to be successfully reunified with his parent at home.

Martinez is gratified by results like this, especially with children successfully transitioning from MacLaren Children's Center back into their homes with Wraparound support. She has witnessed dramatic progress replacing the familiar journey of multiple placements.

For more information on Wraparound or Systems of Care, call Susana Martinez at (818) 755-5923. ■



SPA SPOTS

In every issue, "DCFS News" provides information about what's happening in the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) Service Planning Areas (SPAs). If you have SPA news to report, please submit your ideas to Stuart Riskin of the DCFS Public Affairs Office at riskis@dcfs.co.la.ca.us.

Community Partners Hold Holiday Parties

In December, Los Angeles County Supervisors Michael Antonovich and Zev Yaroslavsky hosted their annual holiday parties for DCFS children. With the help of the many volunteers of SPA 2's Adopt A Child Abuse Caseworker (ACAC) program, children's parties were held in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys. Over 150 children enjoyed a present, visit and photo with Santa. Community agencies participating and contributing to these parties included Northeast Valley Health Care (WIC), Northridge Hospital Healthy Families, Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association, The Waldorf School, San Marino High School, Altadena Senior Center members and many more faith-based, civic organizations and schools.

On Saturday, December 13th, the Teague Family Foundation's Annual Christmas Party took place at Kedren Mental Health Community Center. The Teague Foundation sponsors an annual Christmas celebration for DCFS families receiving family preservation services in SPA 6 (Wateridge). Attending the event were 33 families and 100 youth ages 4 to 12.

Drives Nets 1,200 Books

Cathy Ioki of the Teague Foundation created a wonderful relationship between Torrance Resource Coordinator Doris Brown and Students Reaching Out, a Torrance-based local community-service high school group. The group's first project, a book drive, was a huge success. The book collection ran for six weeks from October through November and gathered 1,200 new and used books. These books have been distributed to the Torrance, Lakewood and Wateridge offices for use as gifts and visiting room materials for the children.

Youth Grow Through Art

The Art @ Azusa event brought together 80 foster youth and Azusa Pacific University students in November for art lessons and a campus tour. The tour included the newly constructed art hall displaying graduate students' art work and a nature walk. Foster youth created mosaic covers for journals and fun mini puzzles inspired by their walk.

Literacy is part of the program's emphasis, so each youth was allowed to select four art books to read and take home with them. The hope is that the books will help them to expand their new art skills. The youth combined nature and literacy to create a poster for possible submission to the national Reading Is Fundamental contest. At the end of the event, every youth also received a bag of art supplies.

Supporters for the event include Azusa Pacific University, private donors, Comfort For Court Kids, Fiesta Inc., and Reading Is Fundamental. Programs such as Art @ Azusa support DCFS literacy events and the Edelman Children's Court as part of the "Books and Bears" team.

Azusa Pacific University is committed to the needs of foster youth and plans to partner with the Department to develop an "Art @ Azusa" on wheels program to have university students go to other DCFS events and group homes to share their joy of expression through the arts and learning.

Five DCFS Programs Honored

Five DCFS programs were recognized at the 2003 Productivity and Quality Awards Program presented by the County's Quality and Productivity Commission. The Drug Endangered Children program received a Bronze Eagle Award for its efforts in working with law enforcement to rescue children from drug-endangered environments. Other winners included an Enhanced Plaque Award for the Library Cards for Foster Children Partnership, and Traditional Plaque Awards for the Countywide Mitigation of Cyber-Terrorism, the Animal and Human Abuse Cross-Training Program and the Department's Missing Children Web Site, www.missingkidsla.org.

Council Installs Board

The Foster Parents of Los Angeles County Coordinating Council installed their newly elected Executive Board for 2004 on January 8th. The Council, which consists of 35 presidents from local Adoption, Foster Parents and Kinship councils, was ratified in 1994. This group represents over 10,000 caregivers throughout Los Angeles County. The new officers include:

AUBREY MANUEL	PRESIDENT
FRED LEINER	1ST VICE PRESIDENT
BRENDA PARKS	2ND VICE PRESIDENT
PAT COLBERT	3RD VICE PRESIDENT
MAXINE WASHINGTON	RECORDING SECRETARY
TAMI COLBERT	CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY
RAULINE ATKINS	TREASURER
LOUELLA RAY	FINANCIAL SECRETARY
EULA COLBERT	PARLIAMENTARIAN



Foster Home and Adoption Recruitment Efforts Launched

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and DCFS are making a greater effort in recruiting foster homes and adoptive families. One project includes the Robinsons-May department stores. During this past holiday season, the company donated \$1 from the sale of each "Wish Bear" sold by the store's "Share Your Heart...Share Your Home" program. Another project includes DCFS and Viacom partnering to create and implement an aggressive media outreach campaign directed towards the specific placement needs of children under DCFS supervision. This campaign is also aimed towards the need for foster and adoptive parents to care for these children. Viacom has a recreational vehicle, painted with the new recruitment slogan and logo, helping to distribute promotional materials and information about foster and adoptive parent recruitment.

Foster Care Home Development has also developed new outreach strategies. They include the first Mandarin Language Permanency and Safety – Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting (PS-MAPP) class. The first series of classes was completed in November by 10 potential foster parents. This program was developed and implemented as a way to provide greater outreach into the Chinese community for recruiting foster parents. This collaborative program was spearheaded by the DCFS Foster Family Home Development Section, the Asian Pacific Project, the California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division, the Community College Foundation, Asian Youth Center and licensed foster parents. The Mandarin PS-MAPP program is the first program of its kind in California.

The Fosterhope Program has been created under a grant from the Jewish Community Foundation and Jewish Family Services of Los Angeles, in collaboration with DCFS, Community Care Licensing, Child Share, Public Counsel, Vista Del Mar and Faith Families for Children. The goal of this project is to develop eight to 10 licensed Jewish foster homes specifically for Jewish children in need of foster placement. The campaign was started in July 2003 and involves community awareness, education and recruitment of foster family homes as well as collaborative partnerships and ongoing advocacy within the Jewish community. The Fosterhope campaign kicked-off in February and March when recruitment presentations will be made at three Jewish congregations in West Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley.

Car Seat Giveaway Promotes Safety

In November, the Santa Clarita DCFS office hosted a "Car Seat Safety & Giveaway Event." DCFS clients and caregivers were welcomed by Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich, DCFS Director Dr. David Sanders, Department of Health Services Registered Nurse Debbie Davenport, California Highway Patrol Officer Ron Burch, Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies, and Stephanie Tombrello of SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. The event provided current information on the use and proper installation of car seats. Volunteer California Highway Patrol officers and volunteers from SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. provided personal evaluations and installed over 100 car seats. This collaborative event assisted DCFS clients in securing safety for the children in their care.

Postal Workers Play Santa

For the fifth year, over 2,600 children supervised by DCFS were the recipients of holiday gifts purchased by postal workers from the San Fernando, Santa Clarita and San Gabriel Valleys. Postal workers selected the names of children, purchased gifts for them and then delivered the gifts to the DCFS North Hollywood office. The postal workers were dressed in holiday outfits while making the delivery. They were greeted by the North Hollywood High School Chorus and DCFS social workers. The gifts were then distributed by CSWs in the North Hollywood, Santa Clarita and Pasadena offices.

Press Room Is Up

The new Office of Public Affairs Press Room on L.A. Kids is now up and running. News involving DCFS and related subjects are posted and updated on a daily basis. The goal of the Press Room is to keep staff informed about the Department as well as other related issues that effect child welfare services and social work. Other postings at this site include a directory of radio and television interviews that Department staff will be giving, the DCFS newsletter, press releases and the DCFS protocol regarding staff contact with the media. There is also a news article archive attached to the site.

Rotarians Cover Cost to Help Child

For over 15 years, the very generous Woodland Hills Rotarians have offered help and services when Los Angeles County funding was limited. A recent example of their concern and generosity was the case of a three-month-old boy who has a misshapen head. The foster mother, who plans to adopt the child, tried everything to assist the infant, but none of her resources seemed to work. The child was seen at the Cranial-Facial Clinic at the University of California, Los Angeles, Medical Center and doctors believed that the baby needed a "DOC Band" or a helmet-like appliance to achieve the correction. Unfortunately, Medi-Cal would not approve the \$3,733 cost. CSW Jennifer White contacted Resource Coordinator Dede Kuper for assistance from a potential community donor. Kuper placed a call to Rotarian Sherri Polak who quickly secured the assistance and support of her fellow Rotarians. Without hesitation, the Woodland Hills Rotary Club came through with a donation.

LOS ANGELES MARATHON
Sunday, March 7, 2004
8:30 a.m.

Various locations
Information: L. A. Kids, L. A. Marathon website

It's not too late to donate and cheer on Team DCFS as they run 26 miles. All proceeds benefit the DCFS Trust Fund.

SPRING SPECTACULAR

Saturday, March 13, 2004
9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Veterans Memorial Community Regional Park, Sylmar
Information: (213) 738-4749

One of four adoption festivals held throughout the year. These festivals are designed to help match children waiting to be adopted with applicants who have completed the home study process and are waiting to adopt a child.

CELEBRATION ONE

Tuesday, June 1, 2004
6 p.m.

Kodak Theatre, Hollywood
Information: (213) 351-0102

The 15th annual commencement ceremony honors DCFS youth emancipating from the foster care system. Hundreds of youth attending the ceremony are expected to receive scholarships.

MARCH IS NATIONAL SOCIAL WORKER MONTH!

Staff Advisory Forum Created

Effective communication throughout the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is vital in continuing the effort to enhance the outcomes for children and families. To increase communication internally, a DCFS Staff Advisory Forum was recently created to seek thoughts, concerns and solutions on a broad range of issues that impact staff's daily, committed efforts in achieving Departmental outcomes of safety and permanence.

Staff from various Department offices, divisions and sections willing to express their ideas, concerns and solutions got together in March for the first Staff Advisory Forum meeting. In an effort to establish and maintain productivity, the Forum will be split into two groups (four Service Planning Areas each) and each group will meet bi-monthly.

Representation for the first meeting was diverse. Staff from many areas of the Department including Clerical support, Regional staff (Emergency Response, Family Maintenance and Reunification, Adoptions, Specialized Programs), Emancipation, Finance, Human Resources, Internal Affairs, ITS, Unions, Policy/Training, Public Health Nurses, Wraparound, Quality Assurance and Revenue Enhancement were present. The representatives were chosen at random and were asked to make a one-year commitment to participating.

For more information on the Staff Advisory Forum, please call Lois Shirk in the Office of Public Affairs at (213) 351-5886. ■



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DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN TEAM AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

find appropriate placements freeing law enforcement to complete their investigations without children present. Working with local hospitals and fire departments, the DEC Program ensures that drug-endangered children receive optimum care and services.

Last October, the County of Los Angeles Quality and Productivity Commission honored the Drug Endangered Children Response Team as one of the top three county programs at the 17th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program. ■

NEW UNIT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

- social and emotional development;
- Developing academic skills with an emphasis on literacy;
- Insuring that direct educational services such as preschool, tutoring, academic mentoring, educational/vocational and life skill resources are made available;
- Tracking school performance;
- Actively monitoring each child's education and interceding when problems are detected.

To insure these outcomes, the Department will develop educational support within each Service Planning Area (SPA) and enhance the staff's awareness of the importance of addressing each child's school and educational needs. ■

WRAPAROUND AND SOC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

It is important for the CSW and the Wraparound Team to be on the same page working together. If DCFS closes the case without notifying the Wraparound Team, then Wraparound can no longer provide services and it leaves the family hanging. SOC services can still continue even after DCFS has closed the case.

According to Dr. Rauso, presentations are being made to DCFS staff on Wraparound and SOC in each of the SPA offices. The telephone numbers of local liaisons and a referral form is located on the L.A. Kids web site. ■